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**“Beeman: Time for a Change in US Association with New Zealand.” Statement by US Ambassador-designate to New Zealand and Western Samoa Josiah Beeman in testimony before his Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmation hearing. (940222)**

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**BEEMAN: TIME FOR A CHANGE IN U.S. ASSOCIATION WITH NEW ZEALAND**

(Text: Senate Foreign Relations confirmation hearing) (750) Washington — It is time for a change in the U.S. relationship with New Zealand, according to Josiah Horton Beeman, U.S. Ambassador-designate to New Zealand and Western Samoa.

In a statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee February 22, Beeman said: “The Administration has just announced that the United States is restoring senior-level political and military contacts for discussions on political, strategy and broad security matters. It hopes that this initiative will lead over time to resolution of the issues that impede restoration of the full relationship which our two countries enjoyed before 1987.”

Following is the text of Beeman’s statement before the committee, as prepared for delivery:

(begin text) Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Clinton’s nominee to be United States Ambassador to New Zealand and Western Samoa. I appreciate greatly the confidence the President has placed in me by this nomination. I am also most grateful to my good friends Congressman Howard Berman and Senator Dianne Feinstein, both from my home state of California, for their kind remarks.

This is a time for change in our country’s association with New Zealand. In recent months we have made progress toward improving our bilateral relations. President Clinton stated on November 20th, after his meeting in Seattle with Prime Minister Bolger of New Zealand, that they were uncomfortable with the status of the relationship and agreed to see what could be done.

The Administration has just announced that the United States is restoring senior-level political and military contacts for discussions on political, strategy and broad security matters. It hopes that this initiative will lead over time to resolution of the issues that impede restoration of the full relationship which our two countries enjoyed before 1987.

Our relations with Western Samoa are excellent, and we will continue to build upon the close friendship we have developed since that country achieved its independence.

I look forward to undertaking this responsibility should the United States Senate deem me qualified. I have devoted a good deal of my life to issues involving American foreign policy. Even as a child, it was my good fortune to reside in San Francisco during the founding of the United Nations. I remember waiting in hotel lobbies and introducing myself to people like Anthony Eden.

It was later my privilege to serve as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, a city very conscious of its role on the Pacific rim. This led to a decade of association with the late Congressman Philip Burton as his top aide and first staff director of the Democratic Caucus in the House of Representatives. Phil was a fierce advocate for human rights, a skilled legislator and renowned for his ability to build coalitions. I hope I have absorbed a measure of his courage, dedication and ability.

Throughout my life, my political activities have been complemented by my religious commitments. My service to the Presbyterian Church spans four decades and ranges from membership on local church sessions to chairing the General Assembly Council — the church's national governing board. In the Mid 1980s, I chaired the committee that was charged with reunification of the northern and southern churches which had been divided since the Civil War. As Secretary of International Affairs, I was engaged in South Africa, Indochina and Latin America.

This commitment continues to be manifested in my current involvement in education efforts and substantive negotiations around issues of peace, justice and reconciliation with Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

President Clinton and Secretary Christopher have emphasized the great importance of the Asia-Pacific region to the United States. Our security, diplomatic and commercial links have been built over decades of patient effort. They require attentive maintenance and strengthening. In addition, we must recognize and respond to new challenges as they present themselves.

Perhaps our greatest opportunity will be to develop a new vision for our participation and leadership in the region's phenomenal economic renaissance. I'm enthusiastic about playing a role in that ongoing process.

I believe I would bring to this task a combination of skills and a range of professional experience that would allow me to discharge my duties with credit to the President who has nominated me. It is my hope that this Committee and the Senate will concur in that judgment.

(end text) NNNN